

COMFORT TO THE CHRISTIAN, UN-
DER ALL THE TROUBLES OF LIFE.

A
S E R M O N

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T O

SIR JAMES HALL, BARONET,

THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE

I S,

IN TESTIMONY OF THE

HIGHEST ESTEEM,

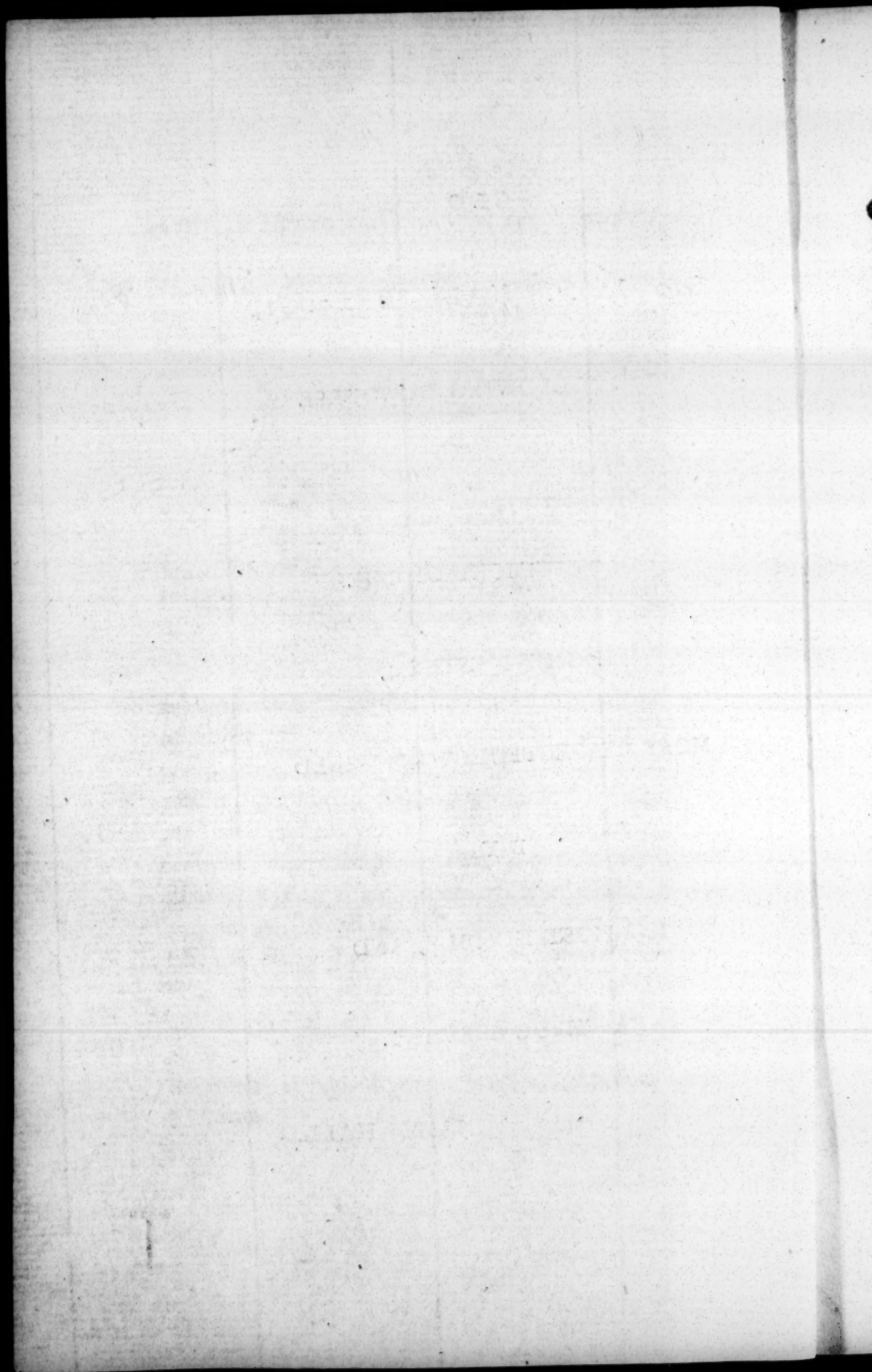
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B Y

HIS MOST HUMBLE, AND

FAITHFUL SERVANT.

JAMES HALL.



COMFORT TO THE CHRISTIAN, UN-
DER ALL THE TROUBLES OF LIFE.

JOHN xiv. 1.

*Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in
God, believe also in me.*

THESE words are part of our Lord's consolatory discourse to his disciples, the night in which he was betrayed; and they propose to us a source of happiness and comfort, under all the troubles of life. After supper, we are told, he rose from table, girded himself with a towel, and, having poured water into a basin, began to wash the disciples' feet. When he had ungirded himself, and was set down again, he said unto them, *Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well: for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's*

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another's feet; for I have given you an example that ye should do, as I have done unto you. He then told them plainly, what he had frequently mentioned before, that he was about to leave them; that the time was at hand, when he should be betrayed by one of his disciples, denied by another, deserted by all, and delivered into the hands of his enemies, to be crucified and slain. The disciples, who had all along expected a temporal kingdom, and who had been disputing, which of them should be the greatest in it, were much dejected at what he told them. The thoughts of his death blasted their hopes, frustrated all their sanguine expectations, and filled them with sorrow. But the compassionate Jesus, in order to cheer their drooping spirits, and afford them comfort, amidst the melancholy scene that was to follow, begins in the words of our text, *I let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me**; as if he had said, tho' matters, at

* Or, as it is rendered by Dr Campbell, in his new, and much admired, translation of the gospels, Believe on God, and believe on me. πιστευετε εἰς τὸν Θεόν, & εἰς ἐμὴν πιστευετε. The Doctor observes that the Greek expression, in this passage, is ambiguous, and capable of being rendered different ways. The Vulgate, he adds, which had great influence upon the translators in the west, has preferred the opinion that πιστευετε, in the first clause, is an indicative, *creditis in Deum, in me credite*; and, in respect

at present, have an unpleasant aspect ; tho' I am about to be taken from you, and exposed to the contempt and derision of the wicked ; yet let not your hearts be troubled : ye believe in God, the maker, preserver, and governor of the universe ; believe also in me, that I Jesus am the Christ, the saviour, the redeemer of men.

What we propose, at this time, is, through divine assistance, to shew, that a belief in the providence of God, and faith in the merits of Jesus, are true sources of comfort under all the trials and troubles of life. *Let not your hearts be troubled*, says Jesus : *ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

Let not your hearts be troubled. Here, my brethren, is an advice. Advice is easily and frequently given to the distressed. But Jesus, you see, does

respect of the sense, is followed by Erasmus, the Zurich translation, Castalio, and Beza. The Syriac, has on the contrary, preferred the opinion, that it is an imperative, which opinion seems to be more generally adopted in the east. It was so understood by Nonnus, who thus expresses the sense: *ἀλλὰ οὕτω ὡς ἐμοὶ πισυνάτε.* This is the sense which the Greek commentators also put upon the words ; and, in this way, Luther, and several eminent English divines interpret them.

does more. He not only advises us what we ought to do in times of trouble ; but also directs us to a remedy—to what will cheer and comfort us, under every dark and gloomy dispensation.—*Let not your hearts be troubled*, says he : *ye believe in God, believe also in me.* We are not, however, from these words, to infer, that he requires us to be altogether unconcerned about the evils of life—No, my brethren ; a moderate degree of concern about them is *innocent*, nay even *commendable*. It is all *immoderate* grief and concern which he advises us to avoid. And the propriety of the advice is evident to every one who believes in the providence of God.

Now that there is a providence, that there is a God who governs the world, we have every degree of certainty. The sacred volumes confirm this doctrine. They inform us that all wait upon him ; that he rules supreme in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of this lower world ; that his eye pervades universal nature ; that he knows all the beasts of the mountains, and the cattle upon a thousand hills ; that he supports every creature by his bounty ; and that man is, in a particular manner, the object of his care ; that he loves us better than we do ourselves ; and has so great a regard for us, that even the *very hairs of our head are all numbered.*

bered. Now since this is the case, *Let not your hearts be troubled*; but rather rejoice that, as you are not able to govern yourselves aright, the direction of your affairs is in the hands of one, who is merciful and full of compassion, who has your interest at heart, and who knows, *better than you*, what is for your good. Let, therefore, neither misfortunes nor disappointments, nor losses of any kind ever disturb your quiet.—Trust in the Lord, with all your heart; and he will direct your steps. Cast all your cares upon him: for he careth for you—Be assured, Christians, if riches, and the good things of life are for your advantage, they will be conferred upon you, and continued with you to the end of your journey. But, if, in the course of his providence, ye are not so rich and prosperous as some around you, do not complain, nor think them happier than you. Be assured, there is no situation of life exempted from troubles. They are to be found in the gilded chariot, in the splendid mansion, as well as in the humble cottage—Riches, honours, preferments, indeed, look gay at a distance. They are ready to catch the eye, and draw attention. But approach them; view them more narrowly; and you will see them surrounded with difficulties—you will find them not what they appear. Solomon, who courted pleasure in every form, pronounces all to be

be *vanity, and vexation of spirit*. Do not complain, nor think that the Father of the universe is unmindful of your interest, when he gives you to drink of the bitter cup of adversity. Prosperity is not always a mark of his love. Consider the rich man in the Gospel—He fared sumptuously every day ; and perhaps was, by many around him, thought the favourite of heaven. But ah ! how different the case ! how great the mistake ! he had his portion in this life. Lazarus, at his gate, was fain to eat of the crumbs that fell from his table. But see the end of his poverty—He was carried to a plentiful country ; while the rich man could not obtain a drop of water, to cool his tongue.

Nor let the loss of friends and relations make too deep an impression on your mind. Jesus, when he was about to leave his disciples, said unto them, *Let not your hearts be troubled*. So, Christians, he is saying to you ; let not your hearts be troubled—Let not grief make too deep an impression on your mind, when your near and dear relations are taken from you—Have any of you parted with a kind, indulgent father ? have any of you bid a long farewell to a dear, a loving mother ? Have any of you closed the eyes of a beloved wife ? of an affectionate husband ?

of

of a dear, a *darling* child ? Did you unwillingly part with them : and, when you saw them carried to their dark abode, was you obliged to give vent to a flood of tears, that would no longer be repressed ?——Let not your hearts be troubled : ye shall see them again, never, never more to part. They have only gone before you to a happier country ; to their father's house ; beyond the ills of life ; beyond the reach of woe. Soon, soon shall you follow them. A little time, my friends ; and all your cares, all your losses, and all your toils shall be forgotten. The disciples, you know, were troubled at the thoughts of their master's death. They wished to prevent it. But ah ! short sighted mortals ! Jesus must suffer, that we may be saved. He must die, that we may live. The disciples were soon convinced that all things, thro' adverse in appearance, wrought together for their good. And such shall be the case with us, when once we get to yonder country, and are enabled, with enlarged minds, to view the wonders in the plan of providence.

What, my brethren, tho' your enemies be strong and powerful ? What, tho' temptations have often overcome you ? Do not give up the contest. A little more resolution will ensure success——A little more courage ; and ye shall stand

stand firm, like the hardy oak, amidst the fury of contending winds, or the rock, that defies the storm. Consider, that this is a state of probation ; that difficulties are thrown in our way, to try our faith and virtue. A little time, a few short years at most, and the conflict is over. Greater is he that is with you, than all they that can be against you. God, by his Holy Spirit, is ever ready to assist you ; his ears are ever open to your cry ; and be assured, thro' him strengthening you, ye shall be able to do all things.

What, tho' pain and sickness attack you ? Tho' you should be confined to beds of languishing and distress ? Consider, troubles spring not from the ground, nor do they come of their own accord ; but are sent us, by the Father of all, for the wisest and best of purposes ; to humble our pride ; to shew us our weakness ; to punish our crimes ; to wean us from the world.—Do not complain, when the father of the universe is pleased to lay his afflicting hand upon you. It is a mark of his love. For, as a father correcteth the son whom he loveth, so the Lord correcteth us, for our good. David, the saint of God, felt the good effects of correction. *Before I was afflicted,* says he, *I went astray, but now I have kept thy word.*

But

But, further—A belief in the providence of God, and faith in the merits of Jesus, are also a source of comfort at the hour of death——The good man knows, that his short afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. As he patiently submits, when it is the will of providence, to the loss of fortune, of friends, of health, of strength, of every thing that is near and dear to him ; so does he cheerfully leave this world, and all its comforts, when it is his Father's good pleasure to call him hence. The language of his soul is, *Though the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls ; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.——Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for thou art with me : thy rod, and thy staff, they comfort me.——*What, my brethren, though you must leave the world ? What, though you must be laid in the silent grave ? *Let not your hearts be troubled : for though ye must put off this mortal frame, this earthly tabernacle, ye have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the*
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heavens——In my father's house, says Jesus, are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also——What a source of comfort this !—You see, believers, there are glorious mansions prepared for you in the land above ; and not for you only, but for all them that walk uprightly. And if I go, says he, I will come again——O ! Christians, how will your hearts rejoice ! how will multiplied joy fill your souls ! when, at his second coming, ye hear the welcome invitation, Come, ye blessed of my father ; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world——It is not, you see, a small reward ye are to obtain for your perseverance in the faith ; but a kingdom, a glorious kingdom : not lately erected, and ready to be overturned ; but a kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.——Then your victory shall be complete ; your triumph noble ; and your crown shall never fade away. Delivered from the tyranny of passion, exalted above the powers of darkness, ye shall reign, completely, happy with Jesus, in the land above, for ever and ever.——How, Christians,
will

will your enemies be abashed !——Those who have sullied your reputation ; who have envied your prosperity ; rejoiced at your misfortunes ; and done what they could to injure you !——How will they be abashed ? When they see you arrayed in white robes, with crowns on your heads, and palms in your hands ; invited, and welcomed by Jesus, to come, and take possession of your kingdom !——How, on the other hand, will your pious friends and relations rejoice, when they find they have not been deceived in the good opinion they had formed of you !——When they hear read over, before an assembled world, not only all the pious, and virtuous actions they have seen you perform, or heard you had done ; but many, *many* others, which were done in secret, and known only to your heavenly father and you !——When they find you have, at all times, contributed, what you could, to the good of others ; and that your prayers were sent up to the Father of the universe, for all your brethren of mankind ; but, in a *particular manner*, for those to whom you were not able to lend assistance ? Are not these, my pious friends, prospects sufficient to animate you with courage, in your spiritual warfare ? sufficient to

cheer and comfort you, under all the trials and troubles of life?—Go on in your Christian course. Lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth more easily beset you. Continue faithful to the death; and ye shall receive the crown of life—*Let not your hearts be troubled.* Your sins are pardoned—Your ransom is paid—The justice of God is satisfied; and Jesus is gone before you, to the heavenly country; to secure your inheritance; to ratify your title to happiness; and to procure for you admission into the land above.—Rejoice—He hears your prayers. He presents them to his father. He is touched with a fellow-feeling of your infirmities, and will grant your humble requests.

But what shall we say to those, who murmur at providence; who complain of their lot; and say, in their heart, that they will not have God to reign over them?—What shall we say to those, who despise the admonitions of the gospel; who neglect the duties of religion; and do to others *not* as they wish that others should do to them?—To such the words of our text are not directed. To such they afford no comfort. To such Jesus is not saying, *Let not your hearts be troubled*; but crying, Repent, repent; that your sins may be blotted out. Repent; and ye shall obtain mercy.

cy. Repent ; while the father of the universe is standing with out-stretched arms, ready to receive you. Turn ye, turn ye ; why will ye die ? Turn to the Lord ; and he will have mercy upon you ; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.—O turn unto him, and live : for he is not willing that any should perish. Consider, there will be joy in heaven, at your conversion ; and the God of consolation, who is ever mindful of the prayer of the humble, will send his holy spirit, to lead and direct you ; to assist and strengthen you ; to cheer and comfort you, in every difficult part of your converted state. But, if ye continue in sin, and neglect the offers of mercy ; what can ye expect ? what, my brethren, will be the consequence ?—Shall ever the crown of glory encircle that head, which is full of vanity and lies ? Shall ever that tongue, which delights in cursing and blasphemy, in falsehood, deceit, and detraction ; shall it ever bear its part in the great Hosanna, in the heavenly anthems, and songs of the Redeemed ? Shall ever those feet, which delight in the paths of iniquity, and in the way of sinners, stand within the gates, or tread the golden streets of the city of God ?—Do not deceive yourselves, by vain delusive hopes, concerning the mercy of God. Do not imagine, that he will overlook the violation
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of his law. Has he said it ; and shall he not do it ? Has he spoken it ; and shall he not bring it to pass ? Nor think him severe, for what he has threatened. He has promised you, everlasting life, never-ending felicity ; if, while in this transitory state, ye comply with those terms of faith, and obedience, on which it is offered in the Gospel. He has threatened everlasting punishment in the world to come, if now ye forsake his laws. Be not deceived : God is not mocked. There is now no excuse for the workers of iniquity. The way to happiness is open to all. We have every inducement to enter upon it, and every thing to fear, if we turn aside—We are left to our choice. Our eyes are open—We see the reward ; and know how to attain it. We are warned of the danger ; and know how to avoid it. If we do well—if we obey the dictates of reason and conscience ; and walk in the paths of our duty : as sure as God has said it, we shall be happy. But if we do ill, and neglect to perform those plain and rational duties, which he has required, our punishment will be just ; we must stand to the consequences.

Let me, therefore, intreat you ; as you value the favour of God, and a happy eternity ; as you value every thing that is near and dear
to

to you, to turn aside from the paths of sin, which lead to death; and to hold on your Christian course rejoicing. The Lord will be a sun and shield. He will give grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from them, that walk uprightly. Tho' he hide his face from you, it shall be but for a moment, in order to wean you from the world. Quicken then your pace. It is true, Christians, the journey is difficult. It is uphill. But rejoice—Behold! Jerusalem appears!—Jerusalem! the joy of the whole land!—Soon shall your feet stand within her gates. Soon shall you mingle with her citizens. Soon shall all your toils be over. What tho', in the voyage of life, ye are tossed upon a tempestuous ocean? Tho' trials and troubles beat hard upon you: Behold your native land appears! The feast is prepared. Your friends are assembled. They await your arrival. Tho' the winds be contrary, ye shall soon arrive at your desired haven. What, tho' you must travel thro' the dark valley of the shadow of death? Tho' the way be rugged and lonely, thro' which you must pass?—His rod and staff shall support and comfort you. His holy Spirit shall instruct, and guide you.—Jacob was not afraid to go down into Egypt, when he knew that his son Joseph

Joseph was alive, and governor over all the land. So, Christians, ye need not be afraid. Jesus, who was dead, and is alive, is governor of that happy country, which is the object of your hope, and to which you bend your course. Rejoice—Ye shall have a glorious entrance into it; and your arrival there shall be sung in rapturous strains, by the redeemed above.—O! my brethren, how will your hearts rejoice! How will pious gratitude fill your souls, when ye behold the glories of the upper world!—That happy country, where ye shall rest from your labours, and your works shall follow you; where ye shall shine as stars in the firmament for ever and ever; where ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the good of every land, in the general assembly and church of the first born; and shall never hunger nor thirst any more; where ye shall sit down at a table that shall never be removed, and shall for ever drink of those rivers of pleasures which flow from the throne of God.—Then, Christians, ye shall join the universal choir above, where there is not *one discordant note*, not *one unwilling tongue*; but where harmony, for thousands of years, has been still increasing by the accession of new voices.—Then shall there be no false friend, no secret foe,

no open enemy. Then shall there be no scorching heat, no piercing cold, no wearisome nights. All shall be love—All comfort—All delight——You appear here, in his lower house, with your fears, your cares, your anxieties. You mingle here with the good and the bad promiscuously. Your pious meditations are often interrupted, and your minds often led astray by seducing objects : but then shall there be nothing to hurt, nor to disturb, in all God's holy mountain.—And what shall enhance the value of these unspeakable blessings is, that they shall never, never have an end.—To conclude ;

Let us, then, my fellow-travellers to this better country, encourage ourselves with these pleasing hopes, in our journey thro' the wilderness, in our conflicts with the world. Let us, no longer, walk in the paths of sin ; no longer yield to the temptations of the world. And, as here there is no continuing city, here no fixed place of abode ; as we know not what a day may bring forth, let us, at all times, walk as it becomes Christians, and candidates for immortal happiness.

F I N I S.



no other remedy. Then shall there be a
lasted here as surely will the resurrection
rise. All shall be new. All corrupt. All
You shall be new in his lower house.
with your sins, your sins, your sins.
You shall be new with the good and the bad
promised. Your good meditation is often
interrupted, and your mind, often led astray
by trifling objects: but then shall there be no
thing to lead you to the end, in all God's holy
house, and when I shall enhance the value
of these unspeakable blessings is, that you shall
never more have an end. To conclude:

Let us, then, my fellow labourers to the Father
count our accounts with that of things
hope, in our journey this, the wilderness, in
our contact with the world. Let us no longer
walk in the path of sin: no longer yield to the
temptations of the world. And, as there
is no containing city here no fixed place of
abode: as we know not what a day may bring
forth, let us at all times walk as if it comes
Christians, and candidates for immortal hap-
piness.



